

Revised
12 Feb 1879

My dear Elsworth

I want to know as usual how you are getting on, and what you are about just now. I hope that you give yourself a little more personal repose than you used to do: you must or (I should to any body but a paragon) you will soon go to C. N. — I only put the initials: [supply the rest] as you like best. You see I do not "lie in numbers", but feebly ^{and drive} stutted in them as an old man, and a very old man, must. How are you in health and what are you doing in letters, besides indexing? I do not like that word "indexing", because you are capable of and have done so many better things. I never knew a man of greater mental & bodily activity, and you waste your time, as I think, on indexing. Any Sillard (except myself) can make an index, and I cannot, only because I want that sort of industry: still, I am industrious.

As for me, I have found out, I am persuaded, another ploy in which "our William" certainly had a hand. The evidence

is only internal (mind you do not spell that word with an f) but to me most convincing and a fortnight ago I wrote to the Athⁿ about it, but the Editor has not inserted my letter; and somebody may have got hold of my notion (to me it is conviction) and may claim it. I do not mean him, but who is Dr. Nicholson? Is it my ignorance and residence out of the world of letters that makes me ignorant? Then again, who is a Mr. Simpson, that I hear of & Doubtless ought to know? He seems acute and, in a sense, learned. My notion about the play was taken up ^{in fact} and printed 40 or 50 years ago, but I did not follow it up until I began upon the new editⁿ of my H. E. D. P., & recently my conjecture has been confirmed by further investigation. I live so out of the literary world that I do not know some of the commonest matters. I never heard of you and of your merits and works, until you had done much to deserve being well known.

I am hard at work now on Vol III, so that I see my way to the end - unless my own end arrive first. I take as good care of myself as I can; and I have a daughter (who I thought too much when she was born, but is now "the blessing of my life"). I call her so, and she deserves it thoroughly. I wish I was only 50 or 60, or 70 or 80 years younger, but your most sin-
* And life ignorant

Sincerely
J. Payne Collier